

**Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION**

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

Section 4-3-100J, Signage regulations for the Urban Design Districts, and
Section 4-11-190S, Sign-related Definitions of the Renton Municipal Code.

REFERENCE:

NA

SUBJECT:

Clarification of the City's Urban Design District sign restrictions relative to the meaning of "primary entry sign" for the purpose of determining appropriate sign requirements for properties located within Urban Design Districts C and D.

BACKGROUND:

RMC Section 4-3-100J, Signage regulations for the Urban Design Districts, prohibits "pole signs" and limits the height of monument-style freestanding signs to a maximum height of five feet in Urban Design Districts C (the Landing area) and District D (the CA Zone) with the exception of "*primary entry signs*".

Section 4-11-190S of the RMC defines a number of sign types but does not define a "primary entry sign", "monument sign" or "pole sign". However, it does define a "ground sign" as follows: "A type of freestanding sign, other than a freestanding pole sign, in which the sign is in contact with or close to the ground, has a solid base anchor, and is independent of any other structure."

A recent inquiry regarding the permissibility of a 32-foot tall double pole sign for a "primary entry sign" in the CA Zone prompted the need for clarification of the City's sign-related terms, regulations, and intent.

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of the Urban Design District Signage Regulations, RMC 4-3-100J is to: "To provide a means of identifying and advertising businesses; provide directional assistance; encourage signs that are both clear and of appropriate scale for the project; encourage quality signage that contributes to the character of the Urban Center and the Center Village; and create color and interest."

RMC Section 4-4-100A, Purpose of Sign Regulations, reads as follows: It is the purpose of these regulations to provide a means of regulating signs so as to promote the health, safety, morals, general welfare, social and economic welfare and esthetics of the City of Renton. Signs are erected to provide

information for the benefit and convenience of pedestrians and motorists and should not detract from the quality of urban environment by being competitive or garish. Signs should complement and characterize the environment which they serve to give their respective areas a unique and pleasing quality.

Although the code does not stipulate a definition of “primary entry signs” its intent is *not* to allow a tall freestanding pole sign, as evidenced by RMC Section 4-3-100J1c which states: “Prohibited signs include: Pole signs . . .”.

DECISION: The definition of “primary entry sign” shall be interpreted as follows: A type of freestanding sign, other than a pole sign, of 10 feet or less in height, in which the sign is in contact with the ground, has a solid base anchor, and is independent of any other structure and serves the function of directing customers to the main entrance of a multi-tenant building or multi-building complex.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. “Chip” Vincent

DATE:

August 12, 2009

**APPEAL
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT**

DETERMINATIONS:

RMC 4-3-100J1e shall be amended as follows: Freestanding ground-related monument signs, ~~with the exception of primary entry signs,~~ shall be limited to five feet (5') above finished grade, including support structure, provided that multi-tenant buildings and multi-building complexes may install primary entry signs of up to 10' feet in height. All such signs shall include decorative landscaping (ground cover and/or shrubs) to provide seasonal interest in the area surrounding the sign. Alternately, signage may incorporate stone, brick, or other decorative materials as approved by the Director.

RMC 4-11-190S shall be amended to add a new definition for “primary entry sign” to read as follows: Primary Entry Sign: A type of freestanding sign, other than a pole sign, of 10 feet or less in height, in which the sign is in contact with the ground, has a solid base anchor, and is independent of any other structure and serves the function of directing customers to the main entrance of a multi-tenant building or multi-building complex.